

*Association
of
Rural
Telephone
Companies
of
Saskatchewan*



MINUTES OF THE
1959 CONVENTION

The annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Telephones was held in the Bessborough Hotel, Wed., July 15, 1959.

Registration was at 9.30 a.m. and at 10.00 the president, R. A. Clackson opened the meeting by welcoming the delegates and introducing the guests at the head table. He also asked permission of the convention to adopt a flexible agenda.

Moved by Mr. Furneaux, seconded by Mr. Anderson, that the chair be allowed to adopt a flexible schedule. —Carried.

Mr. Clackson then delivered a combined President-Directors' Report. In explaining the combined reports, he said: "The directors used to meet before every convention and a few times throughout the year but the association is limited financially and the directors have been unable to meet. However during the past year two members of the executive met with representatives of the Saskatchewan Timber Board and we tried to secure a discount on poles bought between member companies. We didn't have too much success, but representatives from the Timber Board will be here today to explain the situation.

"In December the directors met with The Rural Study Group; a questionnaire was mailed to each company and the group had in mind securing all the information on telephone set-up of today and wanted to know whether people need additional services, whether they are satisfied with the present services or whether they are willing to pay for more services.

"In March another directors' meeting was held with the Rural Study Group and they are still negotiating. As yet I don't think they have made any findings final.

"We had an address by the chairman of the Community Committee on Municipal Reorganization and he informed us that eventually we are going to have municipal reorganization. Personally, it is my opinion if there will be any change it will be along the lines of a county system."

Mr. Clackson mentioned a meeting with Northern Electric in which they said they could give better delivery service if they knew at the beginning of the year the amount of supplies needed. He also reported that Ward-Johnson Electric Co. are willing to give a discount on batteries.

"When the financial statement is read you will see it is one of the best the Association has had and it shows that we are on the upswing. Membership in 1955 was 149 and each year we have had a gradual increase, till last year we had a membership of 202; this year there are 206 paid-up member companies."

Hon. C. C. Williams, Minister of Telephones, spoke briefly to the convention. He expressed

his interest in the rural telephones and wondered why his department hadn't received more resolutions from the Association. He said he presumed that things have been going along very well. He added: "I know you have your problems and I would like you to know that Saskatchewan Government Telephones has been aware of many of them." He reported an investigation into the problems of rural companies and explained that an interim report was submitted recently, following a series of surveys, and that the report would be gone into thoroughly, resulting in recommendations which will be of benefit to many rural telephone companies. In conclusion, he stated: There are a good many rural companies providing excellent service at a cost considered not too high and we appreciate what the companies have done. We do look forward to the time when every farm in Saskatchewan will have a telephone. We would like to hear from you through your officers as to what might be done to assist rural companies; it would be helpful to us in considering our reports.'

The president cleared up some confusion as to membership fees. He said the financial year will end every calendar year instead of convention year and anyone paid in 1959 is paid up. In future companies will be billed in November for the coming year.

Mr. Croll, acting superintendent of Rural Telephones, gave the following information on rural companies:

Total number of subscribers as at Dec. 31, 1959 — 58,237.

Total number of companies, current Act — 767; Old Act — 182.

Total pole miles — 67,700.

Total circuit miles — 115,179.

Total number of poles purchased from special levy — 51,269.

In commenting on this report, Mr. Clackson said: "You can see that with 58,000 subscribers and 67,000 miles of pole that this is a terrific service and the people of this province don't realize that the service is supplied and is there not only for rural but for urban people as well. The rural people have gone to much trouble and it is up to ourselves through our association to put it across to the public that we do exist and we must have a strong organization to have a voice comparable to the service we render."

The president released the Press Committee, Credentials Committee and the Resolutions Committee.

The president remarked he presumed all the members had read the minutes from the previous meeting.

Moved by Mr. Valens, Smiley, seconded by Mr. Hunt, Connaught, that the minutes be adopted as read. —Carried.

The Interim Financial Statement was then read by the secretary-treasurer.

INTERIM FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Statement of Receipts and Expenditures
for the period January 1, 1959 to June 30, 1959

RECEIPTS

Memberships-1958	\$ 88.50	
1959	284.50	
1960	100.00	\$473.00
		<hr/>
Refund re Pictures ..		1.00
Dominion of Canada		
Bond - Sold		50.00
Interest-Bond-Sold ..		1.50
Exchange added to		
Cheques received		
on account of		
Memberships30
		<hr/>
		\$525.80
Bank Balance,		
Dec. 31, 1958	\$ 872.92	
Canada		
Savings Bonds	100.00	
Dominion of		
Canada - Bond	50.00	
		<hr/>
	\$1,022.92	
Less - Dominion of		
Canada Bond -		
Sold	50.00	972.92
		<hr/>
		\$1,498.72
		<hr/>

EXPENDITURES

Directors Travel Expenses	\$312.02	
Printing, Postage & Stationery	121.72	
Audit Fees	25.00	
Salary - Secretary	50.00	
Rentals - Rooms - Convention		
and Committee Meetings	19.00	
Exchange on Deposits		
and Cheques	12.75	
Long Distance Calls	24.71	
Spray - Re - M. Fritshaw	5.15	
Sundry Expenses - re Conven-		
tion & Committee Meetings	8.58	
Sundry Travel Expenses	63.75	
		<hr/>
	\$642.68	
Bank Balance,		
June 30, 1959	\$ 756.04	
Canada Savings		
Bonds	100.00	856.04
		<hr/>
		\$1,498.72
		<hr/>

RECONCILIATION OF CASH RECEIPTS

Total Cash Receipts \$525.80

Total Bank Deposits \$525.80

RECONCILIATION OF BANK ACCOUNT

Bank Balance, Dec. 31, 1958 \$ 872.92

Add: Deposits 525.80

\$1,398.72

Deduct: Cheques and

Bank Memo's 642.68

Bank Balance, June 30, 1959 \$ 756.04

Bank Balance, as per

Bank Statement of

June 30, 1959 \$ 756.04

Moved by Mr. Saunders of Maidstone, seconded by Mr. Yungwirth of Briarlea, that the Financial Statement be accepted.

Mr. S. R. Muirhead, Deputy Minister of Telephones, addressed the meeting briefly. He expressed his pleasure at being present and having the opportunity to listen to discussion of problems. He told the delegates of the retirement of Mr. Cavanaugh, Supt. of Sask. Rural Telephones at the end of July, 1959 after 40 years and announced that Mr. Croll would take his place. He said Mr. Cavanaugh had for the past 7 or 8 months been working on a report of the committee on rural telephones.

Question: (to Mr. Muirhead) "I assume we can take it for granted that after you receive that report and it has been studied that no drastic changes will be made without the approval of the Association of Rural Telephones.

Answer: The report is made to the Board of Directors of Sask. Government Telephones. Although your suggestion seems reasonable, I couldn't presume to speak for them.

Question: It has been brought to my attention that the Saskatchewan Government Telephones intend to build more micro-wave towers and amalgamate some of the rural companies under an automatic telephone system. Is there anything to that?

Answer: There is no question but that the micro-wave system will be extended from time to time but the micro-wave is chiefly a tool for long distance and when it is economical we will certainly build more. Under the present situation that is a decision for the rural companies themselves to make; if they want advice from us we would give it. Better results can be obtained by bigger companies but there are no specific intentions to make any changes or to force changes if companies didn't want them.

Several questions arose among the delegates

with regard to special levies, and Mr. Croll reported as follows on the subject:

"... Second only to the right to raise money by way of loan on debenture for construction purposes is the right to raise annually by special levy funds for the purpose of renewal and reconstruction . . . in giving this privilege the Act further lays out how this levy will be apportioned over the taxable property. Section 45 (3) specifically states $\frac{4}{5}$ of this special levy shall be charged against all taxable quarters; that in addition to this, $\frac{1}{5}$ of the special levy shall be charged against all parcels of land the resident occupants of which are supplied with telephone service. . . . section 27 (9) of the Act reads in part as follows: "Where the directors of a company allow any temporarily disused portion of its lines to remain in place for the purpose of ultimately re-establishing service."

"A number of cases have come to our attention in which the apportioning of the special levy over taxable property was contrary to the Act. The rural branch will be mailing out a form to all rural telephone companies using the special levy, which will take only a few minutes of the secretary's time to complete. It will be appreciated if this form can be completed and returned as soon as possible after its receipt. Thus forms will be checked in the months ahead and when errors are noted in the collection of special levies the rural telephone company concerned will be notified in plenty of time to assess next year's levy correctly."

"... Section 27 — 9 (5) of the Act reads in its entirety as follows: Where the directors of a company allow any temporarily disused portion of its line to remain in place for the purpose of ultimately re-establishing services to former subscribers or other resident occupants, such lines shall not be allowed to fall into a neglected or hazardous condition."

Mr. Croll emphasized the fact it was the responsibility of directors to decide when reasonable hope of ultimately re-establishing service to former subscribers or other resident occupants ceases to exist. When that time comes the poles and wire should be removed and the tax adjusted or removed, as the case may be. He recommended that all companies once a year hold a directors meeting and review all cases of disused runoffs and main lines, and authorize any necessary action.

Question: If there is a telephone line on the road allowance can it be moved into fence line?

Answer: It should be 18" from property line into road allowance. If for any reason you want to run into a farmer's land you must get an easement and register it. If you have an easement and register it, no one can move you. If

you go into the farmer's property at all, you must have one.

Question: Can you put a brace on a pole that will be on the road allowance?

Answer: If it doesn't interfere with the movement along the road.

There followed a brief address by Mayor Sid Buckwold welcoming the delegates and inviting them to visit the park surrounding the Bessborough. He said, in part: "Rural telephones is a service that must be provided and you people are doing it in a unique way. I don't know of any other part of the country where you have such integrated service as you have here. This is a great help for those of us who live in the city; we are grateful for it. I wish you a successful convention and satisfactory conclusions to many of the problems which you may discuss."

Mr. Sutton and Mr. Polkinghorne, who are in charge of business relating to having this Association registered under the Societies Act, presented their report. Mr. Sutton read the proposed Articles of Association for Amalgamation under the Societies Act. He informed the convention that it was necessary to come to an agreement on the official title of the association.

Moved by Mr. Volgeli of Ruddell, seconded by Mr. Furneaux of Nipawin, that the association be known as Association of Rural Telephone Companies of Saskatchewan. —Carried.

There followed a discussion on the proposed bylaw suggesting that the Association should be the bargaining agent for all rural telephone companies.

Moved by Mr. Streeton, seconded by Mr. Gange, that this bylaw read corrected: "... to be the recognized bargaining agent for all **member** rural telephone companies.

The meeting adjourned at 12.00 for lunch and resumed at 1.30.

After lunch Mr. Sutton, on behalf of the Association, presented retiring superintendent, Mr. Cavanaugh, with a gift and the latter accepted it with thanks.

Question: (to Mr. Sutton) Regarding membership, should small companies have the same number of delegates as big companies?

Answer: Yes, this was figured out on the co-operative principle: 1 man, 1 vote.

Moved by Mr. Sutton, seconded by Mr. Polkinghorne, that we formally approved Articles of Incorporation. —Carried.

Mr. R. D. MacLeod, General Commercial Manager of Saskatchewan Government Telephones addressed the delegates very briefly. And this was followed by a few words from divisional superintendent at Saskatoon, Mr. Sheardown.

Following this, Mr. Frandsen of the Sask. Timber Board addressing the delegates, stated

that they had many problems with regard to treating poles and assuring prompt delivery because of a backlog of orders when bans are on the roads. He suggested that they could pretty well assure companies of 10-day to 2-week delivery of poles but that it was difficult to deliver immediately if ten companies ordered on the same day. He continued: "During the year Mr. Sutton called on us with a view to obtaining at a discount poles purchased in large quantities. We spent much time on this issue, but were unable to come up with a solution which would be beneficial to all concerned. I have been authorized to say that next year our membership fee will be increased to \$200 instead of the present \$50.

The delegates were then addressed by Mr. R. A. MacLean, of the Municipal Employees' Superannuation Board, who stated that the year 1958 was the most active ever experienced in the 7½ year history of the plan. He added: "You might be interested to know that today there are 154 employees of rural telephone companies and 113 employers. . . . This year I sent a circular to all participating employers and employees in this plan explaining its workings." He then read the financial standing of the plan.

Question: (to Mr. MacLean) Last year somebody asked whether if a trouble man was working on rebuilding a pole, could part of his superannuation fund be paid out of special levy.

Answer: This was discussed and we can see no reason why, if the secretary of the company keeps track of the number of hours worked on reconstruction basis, some help could not be taken from the special levy fund to pay superannuation.

After the superannuation report was completed, the meeting stood in a minute's silence in memory of Mr. Fritshaw.

There then followed a discussion of minutes of last year's meeting.

Question: (to Mr. Cavanaugh) What about interference from power lines with rural telephone company lines?

Answer: We have had a good many discussions with the Power Corporation on this problem. It is not altogether their fault; in some cases it is a rural problem — a bad joint picking up current from power, — trees are another problem, and clearance poles where they cross over rurals. I think it could be helped by both sides and there is every indication that they would go all the way in helping as much as they could. There is a program set up investigating all these interferences and clearances.

Question: Is there any minimum distance that a power line should cross a rural telephone line?

Answer: Six feet. 48" clearance is permis-

sable under certain voltages from any fixture on the power pole.

Question: Something was to be done to see if we could use farm trucks for toting poles. What was the outcome?

Answer: I was turned down completely on this. You must continue to buy a licence.

Mr. Muirhead: "In matters of this kind I would suggest that your Association go directly to the traffic board."

Question: Why don't we get a reply to some of our resolutions?

Answer: (by the president) We do. The secretary has replies to some of them, some are given here. In future these replies received will be mailed out to companies.

Next on the agenda was the presentation of the resolutions by the Resolutions Committee to the delegates.

Resolution A: (Moved by Assiniboia): Be it resolved that this Association ask the Department of Telephones to amend the Telephone Act so that rural telephone companies can make a flat levy on all special levy property or the split levy as at present.

There was a lengthy discussion, after which the resolution was lost.

Resolution B: (moved by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Morash, both of Briarlea): Due to the fact that modern rural telephone equipment is so delicate that a small amount of ground causes damage to government equipment and thus puts whole lines out of order and the fact that these grounds are caused mainly by green trees in wet weather, Be it resolved that we, the Association of Rural Telephones ask the Saskatchewan Government to amend the Telephones Act so as to give rural telephone companies the authority to enter upon a farmer's land and cut any or all trees within a distance of 20 feet from the pole line. An exception to be made in the case of a windbreak or shade trees adjacent to a farm residence in which case an agreement should be made between the company and the farmer, with the Supt. of Rural Telephones as final mediator. —Lost.

Resolution C: (moved by Rozilee): Be it resolved that we request the Supt. of Rural Telephones to allow membership fees to the Association of Rural Telephone Companies of Saskatchewan as a special levy expense. —Carried.

Resolution D: (moved by Hughton): Be it resolved that the Sask. Government Telephones be asked to put out one telephone directory for the Province of Saskatchewan. —Lost.

After resolutions were completed a discussion was held on the date and place of the next yearly convention.

It was moved and carried that the date be left to the decision of the board of directors.

Saskatoon was again chosen for the 1960 convention.

Nominations for the Board of Directors: Mr. S. C. Gange, Prince Albert; Mr. H. B. Polkinghorne, Marsden; Mr. R. Y. Valens, Smiley; Mr. E. L. Brown, Hughton.

Moved by Mr. Morash, seconded by Mr. Runyan, that nominations cease. —Carried.

Question: Is there anything that can be done about delinquent accounts, such as refusing to extend further service to a party who moves to a new district and has left the old one with a delinquent telephone bill?

Answer: (Mr. MacLeod) Once they make application for service and we give service we are not going to cut it off because they are delinquent with another telephone company, but we assist companies in collection. The phone usually gets installed before we find out about the arrears.

Question: I saw a plastic telephone pole and was told it was indestructible. I was told they will be on the market for \$2.75 per pole. Do you know anything of this?

Answer: (Mr. Muirhead) It is news to me.

Question: There is a rumor current that the woman in charge of the Tisdale exchange gets a commission on long distance calls. Is this true?

Answer: No!

Question: When are they going to have a change of heart about this? I think we should receive a commission for collecting these long distance calls.

Answer: (By Mr. Muirhead) We haven't a resolution here. When it was reviewed years ago we made a study then and came to the conclusion that the amount we would pay the majority of companies would be so small that we didn't think it would be economical or worth bothering with. Now the calls have increased. If it is the wish of this meeting I would be willing to look into this again.

Resolution E: (moved by Hartley Pritchard, Runciman, seconded by Mr. Runyan): That this convention goes on record of being in favor of asking the Dept. of Telephones to give further and more intensive study into the matter of paying rural companies a commission on collecting provincial long distance calls. —Carried.

Question: Is it legal to have a surcharge on calls?

Answer: I think it is.

Resolution F: (moved by Dave Murray, Allan, seconded by Mr. Pringle, Weldon): That duplicate copies be sent out of long distance calls where requested. —Carried.

Moved by Mr. Valens, seconded by Mr. Gardner that the convention close. —Carried.

R. A. Clackson, Pres.
Tisdale, Sask. - Box 544

J. M. Stroeder, Sec.
Pilger, Sask.